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EMPOWERING STUDENTS' CREATIVITY AND CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH DISCOVERY LEARNING-BASED WRITING ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

It goes by saying that 2013 Curriculum emphasizes on the active learning and stimulates students' high order thinking skill. Furthermore, discovery learning is one of the learning approaches which is proposed by the government to support and to construct students' creativity and critical thinking. Due to the fact that teachers' awareness and experience in developing the learning materials and performing the discovery learning activities which encourage students to think critically and creatively is still lack. This paper presents information and guidance how to construct the discovery learning-based activities which promotes high order thinking skills. Moreover, this paper limits its focus on the writing skill assessment in senior high school. Research and development methodology was adopted in this paper. Examples of simple learning activities of discovery learning-based writing assessment is provided as well. The proposed discovery learning activities cover the activities which might be done from the beginning to the end of the learning process, that is assessed in writing skill. The guidance and learning activities sample help English teachers of senior high schools elaborate the discovery learning-based writing assessment activities.

Keywords: discovery learning, writing assessment, high order thinking skill

INTRODUCTION

The system of English language teaching in Indonesia has changed over the time based on the curriculum. Nowadays, the government has administered 2013 curriculum. In this curriculum, there is shifting approach from teacher-centre focused become students centred-focused on learning. It means that it acquires students actively engaging in the process of teaching and learning to find out or to discover new knowledge by themselves.

Among the four skills, writing is considered as the most difficult one to acquire. It includes the process of thinking about planning or drafting to revising. According to Nunan (1989:35), learning to write smoothly and expressively is the most difficult of the macro skills for all language users. He also added writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. Several studies have found that most students get problems in grammar, ideas exploration, writing mechanisms, text organization, and coherence. Moreover, in senior high school level, the students are expected to compose several text types which have higher level of difficulty and which support the practice of HOTS such news item, procedure, analytical exposition, and hortatory exposition, etc.

The scientific approach is not the only one approach of 2013 Curriculum that can be used in the process of teaching and learning. Teachers can also use variety approach which can encourage the students actively to construct their knowledge, such as problem based learning, project based learning and discovery learning. In this case, discovery learning approach seems promising that can help the students in writing. According to Bruner (1961) “discovery learning is an inquiry-based, constructivist learning theory that takes place in problem solving situations where the learner draws on his or her own past experience and existing knowledge to discover facts and relationships and new truths to be learned.” It can be implied that discovery learning as the process of discovering new knowledge by the students themselves.

This approach seems promising method that can be used by the teacher to empower, to facilitate, and to stimulate students to be active and critical in writing. Each stage of discovery learning provides activities that can help and lead the student step by step how to compose different genre of writing text. Through these meaningful activities, students directly will experience and learn by themselves new knowledge in the process of writing.

As consequences, teachers are also expected to design and to develop engaging activities as well as assessment tasks that stimulate the students become active, creative and critical to dig new knowledge by themselves. Furthermore, since writing is a complex activity, Brown (2007) suggested that there some aspects that need to be accounted in designing several writing assessment tasks by teachers. It includes imitative tasks which provides fundamental skills such as spelling and punctuation, intensive task that is skills in selecting appropriate vocabulary

within context, collocations, and idioms. Responsive tasks which require learners to perform discourse level, how to connect sentences into a paragraph, and extensive tasks focus on how to organize and develop the ideas logically, using details proof to support or illustrate ideas, demonstrate syntactic and lexical variety, and encourage students in a multiple draft process to achieve final products. Thus, these aspects inevitably should be included in designing writing assessment tasks.

In addition, the government also uses revised Bloom taxonomy framework (2001) as guidelines to design assessment task in the classroom which promotes HOTS. According to Bloom (2000) "higher order thinking skills involves logical thinking and reasoning, including skills such as comparison, classification, sequencing, cause/effect, patterning, webbing, analogies, deductive and inductive reasoning, forecasting, planning, hypothesizing, and critiquing". Then, Bloom creates a triangle cognitive hierarchy domain which consists of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Since our focus is HOTS "higher-order thinking skills", so our concern is on the top three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy which are analyzing, evaluating and creating. This framework is really helpful for the teacher to create critical thinking assessment tasks. In fact, many writing assessment tasks designed by teachers are still less challenging and lack in providing creative and critical thinking tasks. So, there is a need for further development of writing assessment tasks which can support the student to be active and critical in the process of learning.

METHOD

In this study, the researchers use R & D as an approach to conduct a research. According to Borg and Gall (1983:775), there are 10 steps in conducting R & D, yet in this research three stages of research and development (R&D) are used by the researcher which are collecting information, planning, and revision of the product. The procedure of data collecting began with e information collection, planning, development preliminary form of product, group discussion (presenting the preliminary product), product revision, and final product production.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the guidance in constructing the activities of discovery learning based writing assessment is provided. The guidance adopts the guided discovery by Seamull. The promote

activities are put in accordance with the scientific approach steps of 2013 Curriculum and teaching learning cycle (Callaghan& Rothery,1988). The authors chose basic competence three point five of ten grades which talks about announcement text. Furthermore, we focus on assessing students' writing skill. If it is seen from the perspective of the difficulty level of the material of ten grades, announcement text places in the middle. So that we plan 2 meetings for completing the basic competences three and four which discuss the announcement text.

For the first meeting, we plan several activities which are considered on the observing, questioning, and exploring steps of scientific approach. Seamull states that the first step of guided discovery is exposed to language through examples and illustration. In this step, the teacher provides an example of the material. This step also belongs to the 'observing' step of scientific approach, and 'building knowledge of the field' of the TLC. Variety of students' activity are reading the text, watching the video, listening to audio, etc. In our promoted learning activity, the teacher provides two different announcement texts, the students are asked to read the texts thoroughly.

The next step is observation and analysis of the language through guided questions. In this activity teacher provides several questiones which stimulate students' high order thinking skill, such as analyzing, judging, etc. Students are welcomed to ask questions regarding to the material. This step allows students to find and discover what they need to learn. Teachers may trigger the students to find the social function of the text, the structure of the text, the linguistic features; such as grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, etc. In term of scientific approach this step is called 'questioning' and this is included in the 'building knowledge of the field' of the TLC.

After observing, analyzing and discussing the information regarding the text, the next step is a statement of the rules. The teacher stimulates students to formulate the rules of the text discussed. The teacher may also provide incomplete written statements of the rule, and the students need to complete the statements. This is meant to make sure that the students understand the learning material well. It is also included in the 'building knowledge of the field'. In addition this might be the first activity in the 'exploring' step.

The last step of guided discovery is the application of the rule in practice tasks graded by difficulty or complexity. The teacher may provide variety activities with different level of

difficulty. In addition, the rest of scientific approach steps and TLC lay in this stage. The previous activity is followed by re-arranging another announcement which is included in 'exploring' step. The teacher provided jumbled part of different announcement text, and students are asked to re-arrange them into a complete announcement. Then the teacher discusses it as 'modelling' stage of TLC. And these activities end the first meeting for discussing announcement text.

At the second meeting, students were asked to perform their knowledge or understanding of announcement material such as social function, structure and the linguistic features. The meeting begins with a review of the previous learning material to make sure that the students have mastered the material. Following the last activity, students are entering the stage of 'associating'. The activities on this stage are considered also as 'joint construction' step of TLC. The teacher provides an illustration of an event, and asked students to make a draft of an announcement text based on the illustration with their group members, so that one group produces one draft. After that, the drafts are switched to the other groups. The teacher instructs the students to read and analyze the other group's draft. They need to make comments on the draft, so that the owner of the draft knows what missed from their draft. After each group has their draft back, they are asked to revise their product, and the teacher makes comments and discuss it with the class.

Those activities are then continued with 'creating' their very own announcement text individually. This begins with teacher gives instruction to the students to find the upcoming events in their schools. To help the students to create their written announcement, the teacher provides a guideline which will be filled by the students before they make the preliminary draft. After they finish their preliminary draft, they need to write the final version of their announcement text. The teacher also provides several information on the criteria which might be needed by the students in creating their text. Those activities are the last step of TLC that is 'independent work' in which students are asked to create their own text individually.

As for the last stage of the scientific approach in which students need to 'communicate' their work to public, teacher may ask them to display it on the class or school wall magazine, or on their social media account, or post it on teacher's blog. Furthermore, regarding to more complex text, teachers may use those steps more than one time, for example for the expository exposition

text in which there is more learning material which are needed to be discovered and understood by the students, it needs more than two meetings to complete the material.

CONCLUSION

There are a lot of English teachers who are not aware and experienced in dealing with the discovery learning method. These guided activities help the teacher to construct and elaborate their teaching learning activities which are based on the discovery learning, especially on writing assessment.

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